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OCEOLA:

A ROMANCE.

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CHAPTER I.—THE FLOWERY LAND.

LINDA FLORIDA! fair land of flowers!

Thus hailed thee the bold Spanish adventurer, as, standing upon the prow of his caravel, he first caught sight of thy shores.

It was upon the Sunday of Palms—the festival of the flowers—and the devout Castilian beheld in thee a fit emblem of the day. Under the influence of a pious thought, he gave thee its name, and well deservedst thou the proud appellation.

That was three hundred years ago. Three full cycles have rolled past, since the hour of thy baptismal ceremony; but the title becomes thee as ever. Thy floral bloom is as bright at this hour as when Leon landed upon thy shores—ay, bright as when the breath of God first called thee into being.

Thy forests are still virgin and inviolate; verdant thy savannas; thy groves as fragrant as ever—those perfumed groves of aniseed and orange, of myrtle and magnolia. Still sparkles upon thy plains the cerulean ixia; still gleam in thy waters the golden nymphæ; above thy swamps yet tower the colossal cypress, the gigantic cedar, the gum, and the bay-tree; still over thy gentle slopes of silvery sand wave long-leaved pines, mingling their acetalous foliage with the frondage of the palm. Strange anomaly of vegetation; the tree of the north, and the tree of the south—the types of the frigid and torrid—in this thy mild mid-region, standing side by side, and blending their branches together!

Linda Florida! who can behold thee without peculiar emotion? without conviction that thou art a favoured land? Gazing upon thee, one ceases to wonder at the faith—the wild faith of the early adventurers—that from thy bosom gushed forth the fountain of youth, the waters of eternal life!

No wonder the sweet fancy found favour and credence; no wonder so delightful an idea had its crowds of devotees. Thousands came from afar, to find rejuvenescence by bathing in thy crystal streams—thousands sought it, with far more eagerness than the white metal of Mexico, or the yellow gold of Peru: in the search, thousands grew older instead of younger, or perished in pursuit of the vain illusion; but who could wonder?

Even at this hour, one can scarcely think it an illusion; and in that age of romance, it was still easier of belief. A new world had been discovered, why not

a new theory of life? Men looked upon a land where the leaves never fell, and the flowers never faded. The bloom was eternal—eternal the music of the birds. There was no winter—no signs of death or decay. Natural, then, the fancy, and easy the faith, that in such fair land man too might be immortal.

The delusion has long since died away, but not the beauty that gave birth to it. Thou, Florida, art still the same—still art thou emphatically the land of flowers. Thy groves are as green, thy skies as bright, thy waters as diaphanous as ever. There is no change in the loveliness of thy aspect.

And yet I observe a change. The scene is the same, but not the characters! Where are they of that red race who were born of thee, and nurtured on thy bosom? I see them not. In thy fields, I behold white and black, but not red—European and African, but not Indian—not one of that ancient people who were once thine own. Where are they?

Gone! all gone! No longer tread they thy flowery paths—no longer are thy crystal streams cleft by the keels of their canoes—no more upon thy spicy gale is borne the sound of their voices—the twang of their bowstrings is heard no more amid the trees of thy forest: they have parted from thee far and for ever.

But not willing went they away—for who could leave thee with a willing heart? No, fair Florida; thy red children were true to thee, and parted only in sore unwillingness. Long did they cling to the loved scenes of their youth; long continued they the conflict of despair, that has made them famous for ever. Whole armies, and many a hard struggle, it cost the pale-face to dispossess them; and then they went not willingly—they were torn from thy bosom like wolf-cubs from their dam, and forced to a far western land. Sad their hearts, and slow their steps, as they faced toward the setting sun. Silent or weeping, they moved onward. In all that band, there was not one voluntary exile.

No wonder they disliked to leave thee. I can well comprehend the poignancy of their grief. I too have enjoyed the sweets of thy flowery land, and parted from thee with like reluctance. I have walked under the shadows of thy majestic forests, and bathed in thy limpid streams—not with the hope of rejuvenescence, but the certainty of health and joy. Oft have I made my couch under the canopy of thy spreading palms and magnolias, or stretched myself along the green-sward of thy savannas; and, with eyes bent upon the blue ether of thy heavens, have listened to my heart repeating the words of the eastern poet:

Oh! if there be an Elysium on earth,
It is this—it is this!

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CHAPTER II.

THE INDIGO PLANTATION.

My father was an indigo planter; his name was Randolph. I bear his name in full—George Randolph.

There is Indian blood in my veins. My father was of the Randolphs of Roanoke—hence descended from the Princess Pocahontas. He was proud of his Indian ancestry—almost vain of it.

It may sound paradoxical, especially to European ears; but it is true, that white men in America, who have Indian blood in them, are proud of the taint. Even to be a 'half-breed' is no badge of shame—particularly where the *sang mêlé* has been gifted with fortune. Not all the volumes that have been written bear such strong testimony to the grandeur of the Indian character as this one fact—we are not ashamed to acknowledge them as ancestry!

Hundreds of white families lay claim to descent from the Virginian princess. If their claims be just, then must the fair Pocahontas have been a blessing to her lord.

I think my father was of the true lineage; at all events, he belonged to a proud family in the 'old dominion'; and during his early life had been surrounded by sable slaves in hundreds. But his rich patrimonial lands became at length worn out—profuse hospitality well-nigh ruined him; and not brooking an inferior station, he gathered up the fragments of his fortune, and 'moved' southward—there to begin the world anew.

I was born before this removal, and am therefore a native of Virginia; but my earliest impressions of a home were formed upon the banks of the beautiful Sawanee, in Florida. That was the scene of my boyhood's life—the spot consecrated to me by the joys of youth and the charms of early love.

I would paint the picture of my boyhood's home. Well do I remember it: so fair a scene is not easily effaced from the memory.

A handsome 'frame'-house, coloured white, with green Venetians over the windows, and a wide verandah extending all round. Carved wooden porticoes support the roof of this verandah, and a low balustrade with light railing separates it from the adjoining grounds—from the flower parterre in front, the orangery on the right flank, and a large garden on the left. From the outer edge of the parterre, a smooth lawn slopes gently to the bank of the river—here expanding to the dimensions of a noble lake, with distant wooded shores, islets that seem suspended in the air, wild-fowl upon the wing, and wild-fowl in the water.

Upon the lawn, behold tall tapering palms, with pinnatifid leaves—a species of *oreodoxia*—others with broad fan-shaped fronds—the *palmettoes* of the south; behold magnolias, clumps of the fragrant *illicium*, and radiating crowns of the *yucca gloriosa*—all indigenous to the soil. Another native presents itself to the eye—a huge live-oak extending its long horizontal boughs, covered thickly with evergreen coriaceous leaves, and broadly shadowing the grass beneath. Under its shade, behold a beautiful girl, in light summer robes—her hair loosely coiled with a white kerchief, from the folds of which have escaped long tresses glittering with the hues of gold. That is my sister Virginia, my only sister, still younger than myself. Her golden hair bespeaks not her Indian descent, but in that she takes after our mother. She is playing with her pets, the doe of the fallow deer, and its pretty spotted fawn. She is feeding them with the pulp of the sweet orange, of which they are immoderately fond. Another favourite is by her side, led by its tiny chain. It is the black fox-squirrel, with glossy coat and quivering tail. Its eccentric gambols frighten the fawn, causing

the timid creature to start over the ground, and press closer to its mother, and sometimes to my sister, for protection.

The scene has its accompaniment of music. The golden oriole, whose nest is among the orange-trees, gives out its liquid song; the mock-bird, caged in the verandah, repeats the strain with variations. The gay mimic echoes the red cardinal and the blue jay, both fluttering among the flowers of the magnolia; it mocks the chatter of the green paroquets, that are busy with the berries of the tall cypresses down by the water's edge; at intervals it repeats the wild scream of the Spanish curlews that wave their silver wings overhead, or the cry of the *tantalus* heard from the far islets of the lake. The bark of the dog, the mewing of the cat, the binny of mules, the neighing of horses, even the tones of the human voice, are all imitated by this versatile and incomparable songster.

The rear of the dwelling presents a different aspect—perhaps not so bright, though not less cheerful. Here is exhibited a scene of active life—a picture of the industry of an indigo plantation.

A spacious enclosure, with its 'post-and-rail' fence, adjoins the house. Near the centre of this stands the *pièce de résistance*—a grand shed that covers half an acre of ground, supported upon strong pillars of wood. Underneath are seen huge oblong vats, hewn from the great trunks of the cypress. They are ranged in threes, one above the other, and communicate by means of spigots placed in their ends. In these the precious plant is macerated, and its cerulean colour extracted.

Beyond are rows of pretty little cottages, uniform in size and shape, each embowered in its grove of orange-trees, whose ripening fruit and white wax-like flowers fill the air with perfume. These are the negro cabins. Here and there, towering above their roofs in upright attitude, or bending gently over, is the same noble palm-tree that ornaments the lawn in front. Other houses appear within the enclosure, rude structures of hewn logs, with 'clap-board' roofs: they are the stable, the corn-crib, the kitchen—this last communicating with the main dwelling by a long open gallery, with shingle roof, supported upon posts of the fragrant red cedar.

Beyond the enclosure stretch wide fields, backed by a dark belt of cypress forest that shuts out the view of the horizon. These fields exhibit the staple of cultivation, the precious dye-plant, though other vegetation appears upon them. There are maize-plants and sweet potatoes (*Convolvulus batatas*), some rice, and sugarcane. These are not intended for commerce, but to provision the establishment.

The indigo is sown in straight rows, with intervals between. The plants are of different ages, some just bursting through the glebe with leaves like young trefoil; others full grown, above two feet in height, resemble ferns, and exhibit the light-green pinnated leaves which distinguish most of the *leguminosae*—for the indigo belongs to this tribe. Some shew their papilionaceous flowers just on the eve of bursting; but rarely are they permitted to exhibit their full bloom. Another destiny awaits them; and the hand of the reaper rudely checks their purple inflorescence.

In the enclosure, and over the indigo-fields, a hundred human forms are moving; with one or two exceptions, they are all of the African race—all slaves. They are not all of black skin—scarcely the majority of them are negroes. There are mulattoes, samboes, and quadroons. Even some who are of pure African blood are not black, only bronze-coloured; but with the exception of the 'overseer' and the owner of the plantation, all are slaves. Some are hideously ugly, with thick lips, low retreating foreheads, flat noses, and ill-formed bodies; others are well proportioned; and among them are some that might be accounted good-looking. There are women nearly white—

quadroons. Of the latter are several that are more than good-looking—some even beautiful.

The men are in their work-dresses: loose cotton trousers, with coarse coloured shirts, and hats of palmetto-leaf. A few display dandyism in their attire. Some are naked from the waist upwards, their black skins glistening under the sun like ebony. The women are more gaily arrayed in striped prints, and heads 'toqued' with Madras kerchiefs of brilliant check. The dresses of some are tasteful and pretty. The turban-like coiffure renders them picturesque.

Both men and women are alike employed in the business of the plantation—the manufacture of the indigo. Some cut down the plants with reaping-hooks, and tie them in bundles; others carry the bundles in from the fields to the great shed; a few are employed in throwing them into the upper trough, the 'steeper'; while another few are drawing off and 'beating.' Some shovel the sediment into the draining-bags, while others superintend the drying and cutting out. All have their respective tasks, and all seem alike cheerful in the performance of them. They laugh, and chatter, and sing; they give back jest for jest; and scarcely a moment passes that merry voices are not ringing upon the ear.

And yet these are all slaves—the slaves of my father. He treats them well; seldom is the lash uplifted: hence the happy mood and cheerful aspect.

Such pleasant pictures are graven on my memory, sweetly and deeply impressed. They formed the *mise-en-scène* of my early life.

CHAPTER III.

THE TWO JAKES.

Every plantation has its 'bad fellow'—often more than one, but always one who holds pre-eminence in evil. 'Yellow Jake' was the fiend of ours.

He was a young mulatto, in person not ill-looking, but of sullen habit and morose disposition. On occasions, he had shewn himself capable of fierce resentment and cruelty.

Instances of such character are more common among mulattoes than negroes. Pride of colour on the part of the yellow man—confidence in a higher organism, both intellectual and physical, and consequently a keener sense of the injustice of his degraded position, explain this psychological difference.

As for the pure negro, he rarely enacts the unfeeling savage. In the drama of human life, he is the victim, not the villain. No matter where lies the scene—in his own land, or elsewhere—he has been used to play the rôle of the sufferer; yet his soul is still free from resentment or ferocity. In all the world, there is no kinder heart than that which beats within the bosom of the African black.

Yellow Jake was wicked without provocation. Cruelty was innate in his disposition—no doubt inherited. He was a Spanish mulatto; that is, paternally of Spanish blood—maternally, negro. His father had sold him to mine!

A slave-mother, a slave-son. The father's freedom affects not the offspring. Among the black and red races of America, the child follows the fortunes of the mother. Only she of Caucasian race can be the mother of white men.

There was another 'Jacob' upon the plantation—hence the distinctive sobriquet of 'Yellow Jake.' This other was 'Black Jake'; and only in age and size was there any similarity between the two. In disposition they differed even more than in complexion. If Yellow Jake had the brighter skin, Black Jake had the lighter heart. Their countenances exhibited a complete contrast—the contrast between a sullen frown and a cheerful smile. The white teeth of the

latter were ever set in smiles: the former smiled only when under the influence of some malicious prompting.

Black Jake was a Virginian. He was one of those belonging to the old plantation—had 'moved' along with his master; and felt those ties of attachment which in many cases exist strongly between master and slave. He regarded himself as one of our family, and gloried in bearing our name. Like all negroes born in the 'old dominion,' he was proud of his nativity. In caste, a 'Vaginnny nigger' takes precedence of all others.

Apart from his complexion, Black Jake was not ill-looking. His features were as good as those of the mulatto. He had neither the thick lips, flat nose, nor retreating forehead of his race—for these characteristics are not universal. I have known negroes of pure African blood with features perfectly regular, and such a one was Black Jake. In form, he might have passed for the Ethiopian Apollo.

There was one who thought him handsomer—handsomer than his yellow namesake. This was the quadroon Viola, the belle of the plantation. For Viola's hand, the two Jakes had long time been rival suitors. Both had assiduously courted her smiles—somewhat capricious they were, for Viola was not without coquetry—but she had at length exhibited a marked preference for the black. I need not add that there was jealousy between the negro and mulatto—on the part of the latter, rank hatred of his rival—which Viola's preference had kindled into fierce resentment.

More than once had the two measured their strength, and on each occasion had the black been victorious. Perhaps to this cause, more than to his personal appearance, was he indebted for the smiles of Viola. Throughout all the world, throughout all time, beauty has bowed down before courage and strength.

Yellow Jake was our woodman; Black Jake, the curator of the horses, the driver of 'white massa's' barouche.

The story of the two Jakes—their loves and their jealousies—is but a common affair in the *petite politique* of plantation-life. I have singled it out, not from any separate interest it may possess, but as leading to a series of events that exercised an important influence on my own subsequent history.

The first of these events was as follows: Yellow Jake, burning with jealousy at the success of his rival, had grown spiteful with Viola. Meeting her by some chance in the woods, and far from the house, he had offered her a dire insult. Resentment had rendered him reckless. The opportune arrival of my sister had prevented him from using violence, but the intent could not be overlooked; and chiefly through my sister's influence, the mulatto was brought to punishment.

It was the first time that Yellow Jake had received chastisement, though not the first time he had deserved it. My father had been indulgent with him; too indulgent, all said. He had often pardoned him when guilty of faults—of crimes. My father was of an easy temper, and had an exceeding dislike to proceed to the extremity of the lash; but in this case my sister had urged, with some spirit, the necessity of the punishment. Viola was her maid; and the wicked conduct of the mulatto could not be overlooked.

The castigation did not cure him of his propensity to evil. An event occurred shortly after, that proved he was vindictive. My sister's pretty fawn was found dead by the shore of the lake. It could not have died from any natural cause—for it was seen alive, and skipping over the lawn but the hour before. No alligator could have done it, nor yet a wolf. There was neither scratch nor tear upon it; no signs of blood! It must have been strangled.

It was strangled, as proved in the sequel. Yellow

Jake had done it, and Black Jake had seen him. From the orange grove, where the latter chanced to be at work, he had been witness of the tragic scene; and his testimony procured a second flogging for the mulatto.

A third event followed close upon the heels of this—a quarrel between negro and mulatto, that came to blows. It had been sought by the latter to revenge himself, at once upon his rival in love, and the witness of his late crime.

The conflict did not end in mere blows. Yellow Jake, with an instinct derived from his Spanish paternity, drew his knife, and inflicted a severe wound upon his unarmed antagonist.

This time his punishment was more severe. I was myself enraged, for Black Jake was my 'body-guard' and favourite. Though his skin was black, and his intellect but little cultivated, his cheerful disposition rendered him a pleasant companion; he was, in fact, the chosen associate of my boyish days—my comrade upon the water and in the woods.

Justice required satisfaction, and Yellow Jake caught it in earnest.

The punishment proved of no avail. He was incorrigible. The demon spirit was too strong within him: it was part of his nature.

CHAPTER IV.

THE HOMMOCK.

Just outside the orangery was one of those singular formations—peculiar, I believe, to Florida.

A circular basin, like a vast sugar-pan, opens into the earth, to the depth of many feet, and having a diameter of forty yards or more. In the bottom of this, several cavities are seen, about the size and of the appearance of dug wells, regularly cylindrical—except where their sides have fallen in, or the rocky partition between them has given way—in which case they resemble a vast honeycomb with broken cells.

The wells are sometimes found dry; but more commonly there is water in the bottom, and often filling the great tank itself.

Such natural reservoirs, although occurring in the midst of level plains, are always partially surrounded by eminences—knolls, and detached masses of testaceous rocks; all of which are covered by an evergreen thicket of native trees, as *magnolia grandiflora*, red bay, *zanthoxylon*, live-oak, mulberry, and several species of fan-palms (palm-trees). Sometimes these shadowy coverts are found among the trees of the pine-forests, and sometimes they appear in the midst of green savannas, like islets in the ocean.

They constitute the 'hommocks' of Florida—famed in the story of its Indian wars.

One of these, then, was situated just outside the orangery; with groups of testaceous rocks forming a half-circle around its edge; and draped with the dark foliage of evergreen trees, of the species already mentioned. The water contained in the basin was sweet and limpid; and far down in its crystal depths might be seen gold and red fish, with yellow bream, spotted bass, and many other beautiful varieties of the finny tribe, disporting themselves all day long. The tank was in reality a natural fishpond; and, moreover, it was used as the family bathing-place—for, under the hot sun of Florida, the bath is a necessity as well as luxury.

From the house, it was approached by a sanded walk that led across the orangery, and some large stone-slugs enabled the bather to descend conveniently into the water. Of course, only the white members of the family were allowed the freedom of this charming sanctuary.

Outside the hommock extended the fields under cultivation, until bounded in the distance by tall

forests of cypress and white cedar—a sort of impenetrable morass that covered the country for miles beyond.

On one side of the plantation-fields was a wide plain, covered with grassy turf, and without enclosure of any kind. This was the *savanna*, a natural meadow where the horses and cattle of the plantation were freely pastured. Deer often appeared upon this plain, and flocks of the wild turkey.

I was just of that age to be enamoured of the chase. Like most youth of the southern states who have little else to do, hunting was my chief occupation; and I was passionately fond of it. My father had procured for me a brace of splendid greyhounds; and it was a favourite pastime with me to conceal myself in the hommock, wait for the deer and turkeys as they approached, and then course them across the savanna. In this manner I made many a capture of both species of game; for the wild turkey can easily be run down with fleet dogs.

The hour at which I was accustomed to enjoy this amusement was early in the morning, before any of the family were astir. That was the best time to find the game upon the savanna.

One morning, as usual, I repaired to my stand in the covert. I climbed upon a rock, whose flat top afforded footing both to myself and my dogs. From this elevated position I had the whole plain under view, and could observe any object that might be moving upon it, while I was myself secure from observation. The broad leaves of the magnolia formed a bower around me, leaving a break in the foliage, through which I could make my reconnaissance.

On this particular morning I had arrived before sunrise. The horses were still in their stables, and the cattle in the enclosure. Even by the deer, the savanna was untenanted, as I could perceive at the first glance. Over all its wide extent not an antler was to be seen.

I was somewhat disappointed on observing this. My mother expected a party upon that day. She had expressed a wish to have venison at dinner: I had promised her she should have it; and on seeing the savanna empty, I felt disappointment.

I was a little surprised, too; the sight was unusual. Almost every morning, there were deer upon this wide pasture, at one point or another.

Had some early stalker been before me? Probable enough. Perhaps young Ringgold, from the next plantation; or maybe one of the Indian hunters, who seemed never to sleep? Certainly, some one had been over the ground, and frightened off the game?

The savanna was a free range, and all who chose might hunt or pasture upon it. It was a tract of common ground, belonging to no one of the plantations—government land not yet purchased.

Certainly Ringgold had been there? or old Hickman, the alligator-hunter, who lived upon the skirt of our plantation? or it might be an Indian from the other side of the river?

With such conjectures did I account for the absence of the game.

I felt chagrin. I should not be able to keep my promise; there would be no venison for dinner. A turkey I might obtain; the hour for chasing them had not yet arrived. I could hear them calling from the tall tree-tops—their loud 'gobbling' borne far and clear upon the still air of the morning. I did not care for these—the larder was already stocked with them; I had killed a brace on the preceding day. I did not want more—I wanted venison.

To procure it, I must needs try some other mode than coursing. I had my rifle with me; I could try a 'still-hunt' in the woods. Better still, I should go in the direction of old Hickman's cabin; he might help me in my dilemma. Perhaps he had been out

already? if so, he would be sure to bring home venison. I could procure a supply from him, and keep my promise.

The sun was just shewing his disc above the horizon; his rays were tinging the tops of the distant cypresses, whose light-green leaves shone with the hues of gold.

I gave one more glance over the savanna, before descending from my elevated position; in that glance I saw what caused me to change my resolution, and remain upon the rock.

A herd of deer was trooping out from the edge of the cypress woods—at that corner where the rail-fence separated the savanna from the cultivated fields.

'Ha!' thought I, 'they have been poaching upon the young maize-plants.'

I bent my eyes towards the point whence, as I supposed, they had issued from the fields. I knew there was a gap near the corner, with movable bars. I could see it from where I stood, but I now perceived that the bars were in their places!

The deer could not have been in the fields then? It was not likely they had leaped either the bars or the fence. It was a high rail-fence, with 'stakes and riders.' The bars were as high as the fence. The deer must have come out of the woods?

This observation was instantly followed by another. The animals were running rapidly, as if alarmed by the presence of some enemy.

A hunter is behind them? Old Hickman? Ringgold? Who?

I gazed eagerly, sweeping my eyes along the edge of the timber, but for a while saw no one.

'A lynx or a bear may have startled them? If so, they will not go far: I shall have a chance with my greyhounds yet. Perhaps'—

My reflections were brought to a sudden termination, on perceiving what had caused the stampede of the deer. It was neither bear nor lynx, but a human being.

A man was just emerging from out the dark shadow of the cypresses. The sun as yet only touched the tops of the trees; but there was light enough below to enable me to make out the figure of a man—still more to recognise the individual. It was neither Ringgold nor Hickman, nor yet an Indian. The dress I knew well—the blue cottonade trousers, the striped shirt, and palmetto hat. The dress was that worn by our woodman. The man was Yellow Jake.

CHAPTER V.

THE MULATTO AND HIS FOLLOWER.

Not without some surprise did I make this discovery. What was the mulatto doing in the woods at such an hour? It was not his habit to be so thrifty; on the contrary, it was difficult to rouse him to his daily work. He was not a hunter—had no taste for it. I never saw him go after game—though, from being always in the woods, he was well acquainted with the haunts and habits of every animal that dwelt there. What was he doing abroad on this particular morning?

I remained on my perch to watch him, at the same time keeping an eye upon the deer.

It soon became evident that the mulatto was not after these; for, on coming out of the timber, he turned along its edge, in a direction opposite to that in which the deer had gone. He went straight towards the gap that led into the maize-field.

I noticed that he moved slowly and in a crouching attitude. I thought there was some object near his feet: it appeared to be a dog, but a very small one. Perhaps an opossum, thought I. It was of whitish colour, as these creatures are; but in the distance I could not distinguish between an opossum and a puppy. I fancied, however, that it was the pouched

animal; that he had caught it in the woods, and was leading it along in a string.

There was nothing remarkable or improbable in all this behaviour. The mulatto may have discovered an opossum-cave the day before, and set a trap for the animal. It may have been caught in the night, and he was now on his way home with it. The only point that surprised me was, that the fellow had turned hunter; but I explained this upon another hypothesis. I remembered how fond the negroes are of the flesh of the opossum, and Yellow Jake was no exception to the rule. Perhaps he had seen the day before, that this one could be easily obtained, and had resolved upon having a roast?

But why was he not carrying it in a proper manner? He appeared to be leading or dragging it rather—for I knew the creature would not be led—and every now and then I observed him stoop towards it, as if caressing it!

I was puzzled; it could not be an opossum.

I watched the man narrowly till he arrived opposite the gap in the fence. I expected to see him step over the bars—since through the maize-field was the nearest way to the house. Certainly he entered the field; but, to my astonishment, instead of climbing over in the usual manner, I saw him take out bar after bar, down to the very lowest. I observed, moreover, that he flung the bars to one side, leaving the gap quite open!

He then passed through, and entering among the corn, in the same crouching attitude, disappeared behind the broad blades of the young maize-plants.

For a while I saw no more of him, or the white object that he 'toated' along with him in such a singular fashion.

I turned my attention to the deer: they had got over their alarm, and had halted near the middle of the savanna, where they were now quietly browsing.

But I could not help pondering upon the eccentric manœuvres I had just been witness of; and once more I bent my eyes toward the place, where I had last seen the mulatto.

He was still among the maize-plants. I could see nothing of him; but at that moment my eyes rested upon an object that filled me with fresh surprise.

Just at the point where Yellow Jake had emerged from the woods, something else appeared in motion—also coming out into the open savanna. It was a dark object, and from its prostrate attitude, resembled a man crawling forward upon his hands, and dragging his limbs after him.

For a moment or two, I believed it to be a man—not a white man—but a negro or an Indian. The tactics were Indian, but we were at peace with these people, and why should one of them be thus trailing the mulatto? I say 'trailing,' for the attitude and motions, of whatever creature I saw, plainly indicated that it was following upon the track which Yellow Jake had just passed over.

Was it Black Jake who was after him?

This idea came suddenly into my mind: I remembered the *rendetta* that existed between them; I remembered the conflict in which Yellow Jake had used his knife. True, he had been punished, but not by Black Jake himself. Was the latter now seeking to revenge himself in person?

This might have appeared the easiest explanation of the scene that was mystifying me; had it not been for the improbability of the black acting in such a manner. I could not think that the noble fellow would seek any mean mode of retaliation, however revengeful he might feel against one who had so basely attacked him. It was not in keeping with his character. No. It could not be he who was crawling out of the bushes.

Nor he, nor any one.

At that moment, the golden sun flashed over the savanna. His beams glanced along the green-sward, lighting the trees to their bases. The dark form emerged out of the shadow, and turned head towards the maize-field. The long prostrate body glittered under the sun with a sheen like scaled armour. It was easily recognised. It was not negro—not Indian—not human: it was the hideous form of an alligator!

THE LABOURER AND HIS HIRE.

My friend, Beaudesert, has detected a vein of poetry in the depths of his soul, and undoubtedly possesses considerable talent for mooning and reverie. He opines that the votaries of song are inadequately remunerated by an ungrateful public. The case of mankind, according to his account, is desperate; for how can they become regenerated in the face of the fact, that an epic of high merit does not pay its expenses of production? Although Mr Beaudesert usually expresses this sentiment in general terms, he is supposed to allude to a certain poem in the Spenserian stanza, by Aubrey B——, which has not reached a second edition. On the other hand, Robert Short, Esq., another friend of mine, conversant with cotton fabrics and hosiery goods, observes that B—— is not obliged to write epics unless he likes; that if such and such a thing is wanted, such and such a thing will be paid for according to its market-value; and that he sees no reason why people should make more fuss about a knack for rhyming, than about thorough acquaintance with useful goods, which hold their colours and wear well. I am happy to find that both gentlemen are agreed upon one point—namely, that musical talent is often exorbitantly overrated; and the whole circle of our acquaintance, with the exception of a gentleman whose son is in the Foreign Office, is of opinion that the salaries of some public servants cannot be reasonably complained of by those fortunate officials. Of course, the expression of these sentiments has given rise to discussion; and it seems a pretty prevalent doctrine relative to the wages of head-work, that 'it's all luck.' For my own part, I do not shut my eyes to the importance of being born with a spoon made of one of the nobler metals in one's mouth; but after making allowance for caprice of fortune, general laws are manifest; and it certainly appears that labour of different kinds is remunerated at very different rates, and not always in proportion to its absolute importance. The point of view from which this fact is contemplated varies with temperament. Some are apt to estimate the absolute value of a thing by its market-price; others seek to adjust the market-price to the absolute value. The one class sneers at the thinker; the other underrates the practical man.

The greater part of labour and capital are employed, directly or indirectly, in satisfying physical requirements; and the usual wages of labour and profits of capital are accordingly determined by the extent of those requirements, and the means which the community possesses of giving *quid pro quo*. Trade and productive industry, or labour having for its end the practically useful, is of all labour most widely and steadily appreciated. In fact, although 'what we are imports more than what we eat,' the lower wants of man's nature are prior to the higher. Amongst practical pursuits, therefore, and the professions which depend on them, every citizen has a certain power of selection; and 'choosing a career' is always an important topic of discussion in family circles. It may be remarked, however, generally, that ordinary occupations are adopted from the sheer necessity of earning bread and cheese, and not from irrepressible bent of mind urging men to activity in a given direction. Although a certain retired tallow-chandler, impelled by force of habit, and the strong necessity of occupying himself,

asked leave to busy himself gratuitously on melting-days; nevertheless, most men, provided they had ample means, and were not habituated to a certain routine, would decline to follow that or any other calling in the beaten road of life. Without, then, meaning anything derogatory to honest work, rather remembering the *laborare est orare* of the monks, I assert it to be literally true, that the ordinary callings of men are mercenary in their aim: wages are the inducement to toil.

When, however, we pass to those occupations the object of which is to gratify sensuous tastes, we find they are taken up very much in obedience to natural bias. It is of course impossible, in the present complicated state of society, to draw sharp lines of demarcation between the different provinces of human labour. The sensuous wants of man, however, comprise music, dancing, theatrical amusements, and in some part poetry, together with the ornamental arts generally. Since the professors of these arts cultivate them from natural liking, and in a great many cases would pursue them without substantial reward if they were possessed of independent means of living, it is clearly not necessary, in order to secure a sufficient number of recruits, that they should be rewarded according to the rates of purely mercenary callings. Hence, such of this class as possess no more talent than many who have adopted more homely callings, receive less remuneration than they might have received in other walks of life. Those, again, who are gifted with brilliant talents, succeed in obtaining no insignificant reward; for the arts they cultivate are patronised by a large and increasing portion of the community, and afford pleasure and profit to the individuals composing it. Adam Smith points out that a butcher is remunerated at a higher rate than other artisans, because his occupation is none of the pleasantest. This principle applies to the case we are discussing, and still more forcibly to the case which we will next consider—namely, that of the class which supplies the spiritual needs of man—spiritual needs as opposed to his physical and sensuous wants.

This class of labourers also adopt their several professions from personal bent of mind. Indeed, these pursuits are apparently so opposite in aim to those which are practical, that it is considered almost disgraceful to follow them from mere mercenary motives. Professors of thinking, therefore, who possess only little more than the average ability of cultivated men, receive less remuneration than the corresponding class, who devote themselves to sensuous arts. Yet, in this case too, if the wants supplied are popular and general, the reward is by no means niggardly. Popular men of genius are successful even in point of earnings, for the amount of their profits has been greatly augmented by the spread of popular refinement, and where formerly chief reliance was placed on some wealthy or influential patron, the patronage of the public has been found amply sufficient. There still remains, however, a large class of intellectual pursuits which appeal to only a small portion of the community, chiefly to those engaged in kindred labours. In these cases, it becomes a question whether the patronage of government can be entirely withdrawn with security and propriety. Professors of science, learning, and philosophy are generally dependent for their means of living on that part of their occupation which is immediately beneficial. They are not enabled to devote their whole time to exploring the remote regions of thought, but are expected to make themselves useful in education or practical life. Nor, perhaps, is this to be complained of, for it frequently happens that those are best fitted to bring into practical bearing the results of science and learning, who have penetrated their furthest depths.

Several circumstances combine to render abstract

studies unremunerative in a pecuniary sense. In all original investigations, a great deal of labour is unavoidably lost, and the public will not pay for abortive labour if it can possibly avoid the outlay. In the next place, from the very nature of those pursuits, their essential value cannot become recognised and notorious until an extremely high point of popular cultivation is attained. The demand comes after the supply. The public cannot generally appreciate the inception of a science or discovery of an abstract truth. To most men, a bale of goods is an object of greater interest than a new theorem. It is, moreover, unfortunately too true that people do not set themselves rigorously to inquire whence a useful invention derived its origin. They pay for it just as much as they are compelled to by those who furnish its practical application; and the system of patents can only partially remedy this unavoidable injustice. The necessary stringency of patent and copyright laws, shews how little the public can be depended on for a just distribution of reward. We esteem it a very praiseworthy exhibition of charity, when an original discoverer, out of whose hands an invention has been taken, is recompensed by a purse, or his poverty-stricken descendants are redeemed from utter destitution.

As human nature is constituted, it is in vain to expect the highest interests of humanity to take up their true relative position. We might as well expect a schoolboy to pay his master out of his pocket-money, as that mankind should labour in order to remunerate those who devote themselves to their instruction. The professors of religion may seem, on a superficial view, to be an exception to this rule. The annual revenues devoted to their support are indeed enormous in the aggregate, and a successful career in the church is not to be sneered at by a prosperous cotton-spinner, or counsel learned in the law; but a little reflection will shew that, in truth, this is no exception. Wherever what is called the 'voluntary principle' is working, the salaries of ministers of religion are less than those of confidential clerks or expert salesmen. With respect to established churches, the greater part of their revenues were devoted to their service in times when superstitious fear and frantic fanaticism mingled largely with healthy faith, and placed men in an abnormal position. Much is thus accounted for, and when we add to these considerations the fact, that of all instincts in man, religion is perhaps the strongest, the whole phenomenon is adequately explained.

Thinkers of the highest class will readily acknowledge, that even the strictest justice and most enlightened reverence for their vocation, do not require their remuneration in pounds, shillings, and pence to equal that of merchants, manufacturers, and professional men. They would readily admit that competency, not wealth, is all they have a claim to. To render the vocations of the poet, scholar, and philosopher so many modes of accumulating fortunes, would be to degrade them. After all, honour, respect, and affection are no mean rewards when they are added to suitable means of livelihood. Beyond a certain point—dependent, of course, on social position and habitual mode of life—wealth, to the low-minded, is mere display, and to the high-minded, is full of responsibility. It is always rash to complain of the necessary nature of things. The adaptation of different modes of life to the exigencies of society, is better than the human intellect, guided by the best social virtues, could *a priori* invent. There is room for improvement, as there is in everything partially human; and for praise, as there is in everything partially divine.

Labour is the honourable lot of man, and by a beautiful adaptation of his nature, idleness is irksome to him. Each in his station, without the aid of brilliant gifts or accidental advantages, may render his

life useful and happy according to the measure of human happiness. And though the healthy desire to raise a family well and usefully, and provide for declining years, too often degenerates into a morbid thirst for riches, the general beneficence of the law is manifest in the industrial progress of mankind. Nor would it be becoming in those who are permitted to exercise their highest faculties, and devote their best energies to working out and unravelling the beautiful, good, and true, to grudge to life's more homely wayfarers such solace and satisfaction as wealth can afford. We all know that a pittance granted in love is better than a liberal allowance grudgingly bestowed. And it is equally certain that we individually benefit strangers in a pecuniary point of view more than those nearest to our hearts. 'Among eminent persons, those who are most dear to men are not of the class which the economist calls producers; they have nothing in their hands; they have not cultivated corn, nor made bread; they have not led out a colony, nor invented a loom.' We should be wrong, too, if we permitted ourselves to estimate the happiness and wellbeing of the different classes of men by their affluence. After Sir Humphry Davy became famous, he contemplated resuming the medical profession; his better genius prevailed, and he remained a philosopher in moderate circumstances, instead of becoming a wealthy physician. When urged by a friend to take out a patent for his safety-lamps, he declined to do so, saying: 'I could then only put four horses to my carriage; and what would it avail me that people should say: Sir Humphry drives a carriage-and-four.'

Whether or not we patiently acquiesce in the appointed order of things, is a matter for our own consideration. Certainly, the great laws which have made the history of man will remain in force; there is no sign or token that a day of change is near. The highest developments of character belong to a scanty minority. The great poets, scholars, or philosophers must still be content with fit audience, though few, and reap a scanty harvest of material prosperity. And yet the world need not despair of great men that will do its work, develop its resources, and reform its life. If there is no demand for calicoes, calicoes will cease to be; the trade of coach-building goes down as the lines of rail lengthen. Not so with the intellectual and imaginative arts. Poets will sing, though none should listen; astronomers would point their glasses heavenward, though it were a penal offence; some few will speak of the great realities of life and the soul, though death should be their guerdon. Genius will serve mankind in spite of itself. Such is the ordained strength of the spiritual element in the human race, that no obstacle which human ignorance may raise can stay human advancement. If it were not so, philanthropists might well be dismayed. There is a divine event, whereto all things tend, and nothing can render it uncertain. Men may yet come to acknowledge that money-value is not a universal standard; and the representatives of Alexander and Diogenes may learn mutually to acknowledge the work of life.

BREAKING-UP À LA FRANÇAISE.

* Ce 19 Août 184.

MADAME BIDAMONT DE ST MAUR présente ses complimens à Monsieur et Madame Smith, et les prie de vouloir bien lui faire l'honneur d'assister à la distribution des prix, qui aura lieu chez elle le Jeudi 21 Août, à sept heures et demie du soir.

8 bis, Avenue des Demoiselles, Champs Elysées.

Such, as nearly as I can remember, were the contents of a slim little note, addressed 'Monsieur Smith, Esquire, Avocat, Hôtel des Bouledogues Britanniques,' which Mrs Smith and I found on our breakfast-table at the above-mentioned comfortable establishment, the

morning after our arrival in Paris, on our way to Switzerland, where we proposed spending my long vacation. For the benefit of those of my readers who may happen to be worse French scholars than myself—if there be any such—I may translate the missive as follows: 'Madame Bidamont de St Maur presents her compliments to Mr and Mrs Smith, and requests them to do her the honour to assist at the distribution of prizes, which will take place at her house on Thursday, the 21st of August, at half-past seven in the evening.'

Now, my knowledge of Madame Bidamont de St Maur, who was the mistress of one of the most fashionable 'establishments for young ladies' in Paris, was very slight; but she knew enough of me to be aware of the fact, that I had a couple of nieces for whom she would be very glad to find room; and therefore, having a keen eye for business, she was most desirous of improving our acquaintance. Hearing, then, by chance, from a mutual friend, of our arrival in Paris, she hastened to send us an invitation to be present at her 'distribution,' or 'breaking-up,' trusting to produce such an impression on us by what we should there see and hear, as to further very materially the object she had so much at heart.

'Oh, do go, Frank. I should so like to see how they manage these things in Paris. Emily Brown, you know, went to one of those advertising schools near Calais, and she says that the distribution of prizes was very amusing even there. Besides, as your brother thinks of sending his girls to school here, we may be able to gain information which will be valuable to him. Do let us go.'

And so it was decided, partly from curiosity, and partly from the desire of picking up all the knowledge we could of French schools, that we should accept madame's invitation; though not without some grumbling on my part at the loss of two days, for what I prognosticated would prove to me at least a very slow affair. This decision being come to, it was necessary to concoct an affirmative reply to Madame Bidamont de St Maur's note, and this at first seemed likely to prove rather a formidable undertaking—neither of us liking to venture on the composition of a French letter. A happy thought, however, got us out of the difficulty. Hurrying to the Palais Royal, I invested three francs fifty centimes in the purchase of a polyglot *Livre de Poche pour Voyageurs*, at the end of which we found, as I had anticipated, several forms of invitations and replies thereto, adapted to the requirements of polite society. Selecting the form which appeared to us the most appropriate, we filled in and despatched the following note:

'Ce 20 Août 184-.

Monsieur et Madame Smith font leurs respectueux compliments à Madame Bidamont de St Maur, et ils auront l'honneur de se rendre avec autant d'empressement que de plaisir à son aimable invitation.

Hôtel des Bouledegues Britanniques.'

Anglicé: 'Mr and Mrs — make their respectful compliments to Madame —, and they will have the honour to render themselves with as much of eagerness as of pleasure to her amiable invitation.' At least such was the English version of the form of acceptance given in the *Travellers' Pocket-book* I had just purchased.

The number of vehicles of all sorts, public and private, which we found setting down company at Numéro 8 bis, Avenue des Demoiselles, when we arrived there on the following evening, shewed us that the gathering together of papas and mammas and sympathising friends would be a large one at any rate; and that if dull, as I feared, it would not be so on account of the paucity of spectators. The anteroom also was crowded with parents and relatives of every degree of consanguinity, from third-cousin up to grand-

papas and grandmammas; some of the latter, by the by, not answering at all to the popular idea of a grandame, being very fashionably dressed, and much more youthful in appearance than grandmothers of children nine or ten years of age usually are, at least with us. When our mothers and grandmothers marry as soon as they leave school, perhaps at sixteen, it is not impossible that we should remember our 'grannams,' not only as the dispensers of plum-cake, lollipops, and half-crowns, but as very fine women.

Ushered into the presence of Madame Bidamont de St Maur by the name, style, and title of 'Monsieur et Madame Smit,' that lady received us with one of her most winning smiles, and, declaring that she was 'charmée' to see us—as, remembering that I had two nieces, no doubt she was—and that we were 'bien bons' to come, conducted us to seats from which we could both see and hear everything that passed. It was essential to the success of her plan that 'Monsieur et Madame Smit' should be well placed.

The apartment—a long and wide gallery leading to the various class-rooms—had been charmingly decorated for the occasion. Instead of the unmeaning bundles of half-withered evergreens stuck about the walls in the style of a village club-room on 'club-day,' in which clownish, unclassical fashion we used to ornament the school-room at Dr Bircham's, on the last day of every 'half'—festoons of artificial flowers hung gracefully from column to column, and along the line of tall windows, contrasting prettily with the white drapery. A profusion of waxlights, artistically disposed, displayed the appropriate decorations to the best advantage; and in short, guided by madame's correct taste and eye for effect, the gallery had been converted, by the willing hands of the *pensionnaires*, into an elegant reception-room. The placing, too, of the performers and spectators was conducive to effect. At one end of the room, several rows of benches, covered with scarlet cloth, and raised one above another, were reserved for the 'young ladies;' while three rows of seats, placed on either side of the gallery, were already crowded with the company invited. At the other end of the apartment stood a table, on which were displayed a large number of gaily-bound books and other prizes, together with the ivy wreaths with which every successful pupil was to be *couronnée* in the sight of the admiring and applauding spectators of the solemnity. On a cushion by itself, lay a wreath of pure white roses, destined, as we afterwards found, to be the reward of the best-behaved and best-loved girl in the school.

But I ought to say a few words on the appearance and bearing of Madame Bidamont de St Maur herself. She looked and acted her part to perfection. A buxom widow of forty, she had by no means laid aside her pretensions to good looks, for she was still handsome—skilful millinery contending successfully with the first approaches of the destroyer, Time. She was dressed richly, and in perfect taste, but soberly, as became the mistress of a place of education; and as she gracefully welcomed each new arrival, smiling and bowing how *charmée* she was to see them, no doubt she impressed her visitors with the belief that she was a very amiable, *comme-il-faut* person, qualified in every respect to superintend the education of young ladies destined to live in the most artificial society in the world.

A glance at the programme of the evening's proceedings shewed that madame's endeavours were seconded by an ample staff of professors. The programme set forth the names and qualities of all the professors who taught at 'Numéro 8 bis,' as well as the order of the entertainment provided for us; and it appeared that, if Madame Bidamont de St Maur, besides exercising a general superintendence, had merely confined herself to the department of 'manners,'

ample care had been taken for the instruction of her pupils in other branches of polite female education. The professorial power of the establishment in the Rue des Demoiselles was immense; and the little army of gentlemen in white cravats and spectacles—all the literary gentlemen wore gold spectacles—was enough to make one feel learned and accomplished to look at them. There was 'Monsieur le Professeur de Littérature Française,' a bald-headed little man, evidently duly impressed with a sense of his own importance, and bursting with the *beau discours* which it would be his duty and delight shortly to pronounce. There was 'Monsieur le Professeur de Géographie et Cosmographie,' whose duty it was that evening to look wise, which he did—as an owl in spectacles. There were 'Messieurs les Professeurs' of History, of Natural Philosophy, of Writing and Arithmetic, of English, of Italian, and of German; of the Piano, of the Harp, and of Singing; of Drawing, of Dancing, and even of 'Gymnastique,' which latter functionary was habited in the uniform of an officer of the 'Sapeurs-Pompiers,' and displayed on his well-stuffed breast the cross of the Legion of Honour. Nor must I forget to mention the gentleman—although his name did not appear amongst the list of professors—whose business it was to conduct the religious instruction of the pupils, and who prepared them for the examinations of 'Monsieur le Curé' himself. He appeared to be a kind of 'Professeur de Religion,' I suppose of the orthodox faith of the country; but I cannot help believing that Madame Bidamont de St Maur, rather than lose a pupil, would have undertaken that he should have catechised in any religion required, even if it were that of a Turk or a Hindoo. *La religion*, at Number 8, was regarded, I fancy, pretty much in the same light as *la danse*, *la gymnastique*, or any other *étude*. The keeper and director of all the consciences of the establishment, the curé of the parish, was also present, and appeared to enjoy himself as much as anybody. No doubt, the *distributions des prix* at the ladies' schools to which he was invited, were looked forward to by him almost as joyfully as by the girls themselves. On all other occasions, his profession forbade him to be present at a soiree where he might enjoy the society of the fair sex.

Madame Bidamont de St Maur now takes her seat on one side of the table on which are displayed the various prizes, supported by Monsieur le Professeur de Littérature Française on the other. The smiling curé places himself on her right hand, the professors and teachers group themselves around, and, at a given signal, the 'young ladies'—between sixty and seventy in number—enter in due order. They are as well drilled as a *corps-de-ballet*, and are all dressed precisely alike in white muslin; each class being distinguished by broad sashes and bands across the shoulders of different coloured ribbons. They enter two and two, beginning with the youngest, and gradually rising to the 'finished' young lady, who, in all probability, has a *bon parti*, a desirable match, looked out for her as soon as she reaches home. Each pair formally salute the company, and then, dropping two folded papers into a gilt urn placed ready to receive them, take their places on the crimson-covered benches. When all are seated, the spectacle is as charming a one as the eye need to look upon. The many-coloured ribbons which served to distinguish the classes, divided the mass of white muslin, and the crowd of fresh young faces, into parterres as brilliant as ever the most cunning gardener could devise. The gayest beds of tulips and ranunculuses would have lost by comparison with them. Madame Bidamont de St Maur had already made a hit. The drilling and dressing had answered the purpose intended. All the mammas, by a process of ratiocination peculiar to the maternal mind, put the effect the young ladies produced in the aggregate

down to the sole credit of their own daughters; and were therefore more than ever convinced that madame was a most charming woman.

We had been greatly mystified by the dropping of the folded pieces of paper into the gilt urn, but the explanation was at hand. As soon as the last paper had been deposited, the urn was carried to the table, at which sat madame and the professor, and its contents being emptied out, the voting papers—for such they were—were examined and counted by them. The pupil who had gained the most votes was to be presented with the *couronne blanche*—the prize for good conduct, to be by her worn during the evening. This prize, by which it was intended to reward and honour the most amiable girl in the school, the girl best loved by her companions, and the girl whom we should call 'the best behaved'—not the cleverest—was not conferred, nominally at least, by the favour of madame; or after grave consultations, like many of the other prizes, between Monsieur le Curé and several of the gentlemen in spectacles. The *couronne blanche* was awarded by the girls themselves; and as Madame Bidamont de St Maur never failed to turn to the best account every opportunity of producing a dramatic effect, the election took place by universal suffrage and vote by ballot, on the evening of the distribution. Whether these panaceas for all the ills which humanity, political and administrative, is heir to, secured the placing of the right girl in the right place on this occasion, is more than I will undertake to say. It may be also that the secrets of the urn were not so well kept as our ballot society would desire, and that, after all, the election was more or less the result of 'legitimate influence.' All I know for certain is, that the learned professor, after carefully counting the voting papers, declared that the choice of the electors had fallen on Mademoiselle Blanche de Bonneval; and that a very pretty girl, answering to that name, rose from her place, and advanced, blushing, to the table, amidst the unanimous plaudits of the spectators. The *couronne blanche* was handed to her with a few kind expressions, by no less a personage than Monsieur le Curé; and then, kneeling at the feet of Madame Bidamont de St Maur, the much-coveted wreath was fastened on her brow by that lady, who, affectionately embracing her, sent her back, more deeply blushing, and still more loudly applauded, to her constituents. As I have said, there may have been legitimate influence at work in spite of universal suffrage and the ballot; and, at the best, it is more than probable that the contest gave rise to petty jealousies and heart-burnings, and intrigues amongst the white-robed electors. But the effect of the election and the crowning of the chosen one was admirable. Madame Bidamont de St Maur may have waked feelings in the hearts of some of her pupils which would have been roused only too soon by contact with the world, but she had made another decided hit.

The choosing of the *couronne blanche* being thus concluded with all the *éclat* that could be desired, the young ladies displayed their musical accomplishments in a concert at which they were the sole performers. It commenced with a *grand chœur*, in which some thirty or forty of the girls took part, and which had been composed expressly for the occasion—the words by Monsieur le Professeur de Littérature Française, and the music by Monsieur le Professeur de Chant. The latter professor of course presided at the piano, and had every reason to be contented with the effect of his composition. Indeed, nothing could be prettier in its way than the effect produced by the fresh and well-trained voices of his pupils. As to the part which the other professor had in this chorus—the words—from the few which reached my Britannic tympanum with sufficient distinctness for comprehension, I judge that the opportunity for a puff had not been

wasted; and that the chorus were made to sing of the delights of study in general, and of the merits of 'Numéro 8 bis' in particular. The chorus was followed by a solo on the harp, a nervous affair for the poor soloist; for when performing on this instrument, there is no possibility of half hiding one's self behind the music. The harpist is exposed from head to foot to the criticism of the company, and inelegance in playing is almost as fatal as want of skill. Madame Bidamont de St Maur, however, prided herself above all things on imparting elegance of manner to her pupils, and the pose of such of them as learned to play on the harp was especially attended to. On this occasion, both grace and talent were conspicuous in the harpist, who was no other than the pretty couronne blanche. She fully merited the hearty round of applause which she received when she courtesied and made way for a stately, dark-eyed girl, with a tragic cast of countenance, the prima donna of the *pension*, and the pet pupil of Monsieur le Professeur de Chant. Great things were expected of this damsel, and expectation was not disappointed. Her style of singing was certainly not to my taste, but I was in a woful minority on that question; for when this prima donna of sixteen, by the aid of a violent jerk of the head, a frightful contortion of the mouth, and a sudden straightening of the arms, got up as high as *do*—my wife said it was *do*—the whole room burst into a storm of acclamations, and the face of Monsieur le Professeur de Chant absolutely beamed with delight. The prima donna was the trump card in the vocal department of the concert; but a charming little blonde who sang next, pleased me infinitely more. She sang a simple ballad with taste and feeling, and, to my mind, was not half so much applauded as she deserved to be.

But the great hit in the concert, not even excepting the roulades, the screams, and the contortions of the prima donna, was the *morceau* with which it concluded. This was a 'grande fantasia pour six pianos et douze exécutantes'—a grand fantasia for six pianos and twelve performers, arranged expressly for this solemnity by Monsieur le Professeur de Piano. Half-a-dozen cottage pianos—we may thank Heaven they were not grands—are wheeled from the adjoining rooms, and ranged back to back in the centre of the gallery, like line-of-battle ships prepared for action. Twelve music-stools are placed before them; a dozen pensionnaires take their seats thereon, and twelve pair of hands, ninety-six crooked fingers, and four-and-twenty bent thumbs suspended over the keyboards, await but the signal to commence the attack. As Monsieur le Professeur de Piano takes his place between the two lines of instruments, curiosity is at its height. The stillness is like the breathless silence we hear of as usual just before hostile fleets open on one another their thousand iron throats. Monsieur le Professeur is evidently impressed with the solemnity of the moment: he taps once on the nearest piano; his white-gloved hand saws the air, up, down, and across, after the manner of musical commanders. 'Un—deux—trois—quatre;' up goes the white glove, and—but what a disappointment to the ear! Instead of a terrific onslaught on the six instruments by the whole body of performers with their two dozen hands, and their ten dozen fingers and thumbs, a single hand begins *piano*, *pianissimo*, somewhere far down in the bass. Instead of the thundering broadside from every ship which we all expected with trembling curiosity, a feeble rumbling only is heard on the extreme left. Presently, however, another hand comes into play, and then another and another; one vessel after another gets into action, and soon a tremendous cannonade is kept up along both lines. Sometimes the big guns of the six basses are worked so vigorously that they completely drown the pattering musketry of the six

trebles; and sometimes the rattling of the small-arms is so sharp and quick, that it fairly dominates the heavy artillery; and thus from *pianissimo* to *piano*, from *forte* to *fortissimo*, and *ffff* *issimo*, and far beyond what it is in the power of ordinary language musical to express, the *grand morceau* went on to its conclusion in a crash which nearly deafened the hearers. Need I say that the success was commensurate with the concluding noise? It always is so. The caterer of popular music who can contrive to make a piece end with the explosion of a powder-magazine, or the bursting of a boiler, will probably make a fortune.

The noise and fury of the *finale*, the *do* of the prima donna, and the pretty scene of the election of the couronne blanche, had put everybody in a good humour for the real business of the evening—the distribution of the prizes. At last, then, the time had arrived for Monsieur le Professeur de Littérature Française to disburden himself of the beau discours which had long weighed so heavily upon him. Adjusting his gold spectacles, he spoke, or rather read—a Frenchman seldom *speaks*—to the following effect.

After telling us with what pleasure he performed his duty on that occasion, because of the very favourable report he had to give of the progress made during the past year, he entered into a detailed account of what had been done by each class in each branch of study. Then, in well-rounded and sonorous phrases, he expatiated on the delights of knowledge, and reminded his young friends of the immense advantages they enjoyed at 'Numéro 8 bis, Avenue des Demoiselles,' where professors of *grand talent*, and a lady watching over them with *soins tous maternels*, were unceasingly endeavouring to accomplish the most ardent hopes of their dear parents. In short, he delivered himself of a discourse which, as he meant that it should, pleased everybody. When he alluded to the motherly care of Madame Bidamont de St Maur, and spoke of the 'sacrifices and exertions before which she would not shrink in order to assure herself of the happiness and wellbeing of her pupils,' what a capital puff it was in the ears of the anxious parents present! When he ran through the whole list of studies, from cosmographie to la gymnastique, and one big word after another rolled out of his mouth or twanged from his nose as the pronouncial exigencies of his native Gallic required, it seemed that No. 8 was a fountain of all knowledge, and a source of every fashionable accomplishment. How satisfactory, too, this report of the progress made by the pupils; how gratifying to all parties the announcement that 'this year' the conduct of all had been most satisfactory; how pleasing to find that, from the department of elementary theology—the catechism—to that of la danse—that elegant accomplishment more than ever necessary to those destined to mix in the brilliant society of our time—the young ladies had surpassed the expectations of their professors. No wonder that, capping his lucid statement of all these agreeable facts with a magnificent peroration, the learned professor concluded a speech more than half an hour long amidst the acclamations of all present.

Then came madame's turn to make a speech, and very well she did it too—saying, not *reading*, what she had to say in a ladylike, conversational style, which was really very pleasing to listen to. Of course, she addressed her pupils as *mes chères enfants*, and assured them how much she had their temporal and eternal welfare at heart. She had a kind word for all of them; for those who were going to leave her not to return, and for those whom she hoped to see again after the *vacances*. She flattered herself that she had earned, as she had striven to merit, their confidence and affection. She assured them of the deep interest she should always feel for them, whatever *Dieu* should

have in store for her; and wishing them all an affectionate adieu, in a voice nicely modulated to express just the fitting degree of emotion, sat down, having convinced her guests that she was not only charming and amiable, but *très spirituelle* as well. The vigour and evident heartiness with which her pupils applauded her little speech throughout, proved at any rate that she was popular with them, and that if circumstances made her worldly, her nature was not unkindly.

A flutter of expectation now ran through the ranks of the pensionnaires, for the prizes were about to be given. Madame took up a roll of paper, and saying: 'It is now my pleasing duty to announce the names of those young ladies who have been thought worthy of a reward for diligence in their various studies,' or rather the French equivalent for that phrase, the distribution of the prizes at once commenced. Each recipient, on her name being called, walked up to the table, and having been crowned with an ivy wreath, received her prize, and returned to her place. The first prize awarded in the first class was for 'Littérature Française et Style;' the second, for history; and so on to singing, dancing, and the polka. In those days, polkaing was just coming into fashion, and the giving of a prettily dressed doll to a pretty child of seven, a great pet of the whole school, as a prize for her proficiency in this much-talked-of dance, created quite a sensation, as doubtless it was intended it should. Though, of course, not to be taken *au sérieux*, the *prix de polka* was one of the most successful strokes of the evening. The remarks which the professor of 'Littérature Française' had made as to the progress of the young ladies in their various studies, were fully borne out by the number of prizes which it had been thought advisable to award. I think that every pupil had at least one, and some had as many as half a dozen, so that they all went home rejoicing, and every mamma was more or less content.

The prizes having all been distributed, the affair, after a few more well-chosen words from madame, was over. The girls came down from their seats, and mingled with their friends and relatives. Books were eagerly held up for the inspection of admiring parents, and the little *prix de polka* became the subject of universal attention. Madame Bidamont de St Maur received on all sides well-merited compliments on the result of her exertions; and Monsieur and Madame Smit, amused rather than captivated, departed in their *citadine* for the Hôtel des Bouledogues Britanniques.

IMPROVEMENT IN BREAD-BAKING.

A NEW process of bread-baking, the invention of Dr Daughlish of Malvern, is at present undergoing a course of successful experiment at the works of the Messrs Carr in Carlisle, and promises to effect at once an improvement in quality and the saving of about a tenth of material. The idea proceeded upon is not new—that has been long known, and frequently made the subject of experiment; but the process by which the theory can be successfully reduced to practice is now for the first time brought forward.

When the dough, mixed with yeast, under the old system, is placed in a warm atmosphere, in an hour or two it begins to rise or swell, in consequence of a portion of its starch being converted into sugar, and this changed into alcohol and carbonic acid. The gas permeates the dough, forming, in its efforts to escape, little cells, where it is imprisoned by the tenacity of the gluten, which forms about 10 per cent. of fine flour. It is this mechanical peculiarity of wheaten flour which has made it the chief food of mankind.

Rye, although of nearly the same composition, has less tenacity in the gluten, and the bread made from it has therefore less lightness; while oatmeal, although much richer in gluten than fine wheaten flour, has so little tenacity as to be quite incapable of being baked into a spongy loaf at all.

When the dough is placed in the oven, the fermentation goes on more rapidly; the little cells grow into large bubbles; the alcohol escapes and is dissipated; till at length, when the heat is about the boiling-point, it kills the yeast, and the fermentation is suddenly at an end. The use of the yeast is to evolve gas in order to give lightness to the bread; but this, we see, it can do only at the expense of the dough, by first converting a portion of its starch into sugar.

To save this waste, it was necessary to charge the dough with ready-made (carbonic acid) gas, instead of making the gas of its own substance; and this was repeatedly tried by mixing the flour with aerated water, but with no good result, since, in the very act of mixing, the gas escaped. In this stage of the business, Dr Daughlish conceived the idea of employing, in the operation of mixing, sufficient pressure to prevent the escape of the gas. This, in point of fact, is his invention; but a vast deal of patient ingenuity was required to make it work practically. In a well-written article on the subject in a local paper, the *Carlisle Examiner*, the following account is given of the apparatus and its action: 'The apparatus constructed at the works in Caldewgate consists of the ordinary gas generator and holder used by soda-water makers, and of a set of powerful pumps, for forcing the gas into the water contained in a condenser; also, for pumping a pressure—that is, a volume of gas—into a kneading or mixing vessel, which is a strong iron globe, capable of containing more than two sacks of flour, and furnished with arms revolving by steam-power. To work the apparatus, flour is put into the mixer, and water into the condenser, the pumps set to work, and, when sufficient gas has been pumped into these vessels, the water is let into the mixer, and the arms set agoing. In eight minutes, the dough is mixed. The pressure is then let off, and the dough rises instantaneously. Thus, in about half an hour, the usually tedious and uncertain process of bread-making has been accomplished, and there has also been effected the saving of that precious tenth of nutritious matter which would have been wasted in exhalation, or by conversion into alcohol. The baker is delivered from the hard necessity of setting his bread at night, and watching for its rising in the morning. Alternations of cold and heat are rendered powerless over the heaviness or lightness of our breakfast-loaves. Time, labour, and material are saved, and thus bread rendered both purer and cheaper.'

But there is something of importance in bread-making besides raising the dough. The oven must be constructed on a good principle, or every other advantage will, to a certain extent, be lost. Our present oven has come down to us as an heirloom from our ancestors, and we have never thought of examining it by the lights of science. In the Carlisle experiments, however, it was found that the bread, however artistically made by the new process, was not invariably what might have been expected, and this led to an inquiry into the principle of the oven. It was discovered that the heated vaults we use for the purpose, in which the heat radiates *down* upon the bread, are unfavourable to lightness; whereas in Paris and Vienna, where the heat *rises* from the bottom, and

passes through the loaf, the top-crust is soft, and the bread as spongy as is desirable. On this latter principle, therefore—new, we believe, in England—the ovens were constructed for the unfermented bread.

We may add, as something that will appear curious to many of our readers, that 'the bulk of light bread—or rather, the space it fills—is but one-sixth solid matter, and five-sixths aëriiform, and that, consequently, very high pressures are needed to make such light bread.' These pressures, however, are so effectual by the new process, that even when the dough is rolled out into biscuit, it retains the gas in minute cells, and thus a novel and superior kind of bread is produced under a familiar name. This has struck Messrs Carr & Co. so much, that we believe it is their intention to confine the use of the apparatus to their original occupation—the manufacture of biscuit; although their doing so will not exclude the public from the advantage of the invention in their daily bread, since it is Dr Daughlish's intention to treat liberally with all who desire to avail themselves of his patent.

THE BLUE CAVE.

WHOEVER has travelled much in the south, must have necessarily made the observation, that in certain states of the atmosphere everything around you appears startlingly unreal. Here, in the north, the world has a substantial aspect about it. You look upon it, you touch it, and you are fully persuaded of its permanence and solidity. But as you approach the extremity of the temperate zone, you often appear to be floating through a delusive creation, which expands, and gleams, and scintillates about you; now immersed in light, now enveloped with shadow; now contracting, now dilating, until your imagination becomes a prey to a sort of dim scepticism independent altogether of reason. At all events, this is what I myself have often experienced, when hovering in dreamy abstraction about the shores north and south of the Mediterranean. Our existence is divided everywhere into two very distinct parts—the life of the day, and the life of the night—which, to the least poetical and fanciful of our species, must necessarily be distinguished by striking contrasts from each other.

I had a friend at Naples, somewhat old even when we first met, who seemed in his experience to have reversed the great principles of life. Having been solid, logical, and somewhat material in his youth, he had become romantic and imaginative as he advanced in years. To him, nothing was so delightful as to contemplate the universe as a sort of diversified mirage, moulded by the plastic power of the soul into infinite variety, and stretched out like a fantastic picture beneath the moon. Lazy people are everywhere the best adapted to keep alive this sort of dreamy propensity; and the Neapolitans being pre-eminently lazy, my worthy friend found the paradise of his fancy in the Bay of Naples, where, with a couple of boatmen at his command, he used frequently to put forth soon after nightfall, and move about in silence over the gleaming waters, and between those lofty and fantastic islands which, studding the whole distance from Misene to Sorrento, cut off the Bay from the Mediterranean. During my stay, I accompanied him more than once on these moonlight excursions.

The doctor—for my friend had studied divinity, and risen to a high position in the church—was, in spite of his profession and the duties it devolved upon him, considerably more than half a pagan; not as scholars often are, through a mere learned deference to the freaks of the imagination, but from genuine, unsophis-

ticated superstition. I would not maintain upon oath that he believed absolutely in Orcus and the Sybil; but there were ideas in his mind, connected with ancient creeds, which dominated all his thoughts, and imparted a peculiar colour to his faith. Our two boatmen—which, however, is no marvel—were to the full as much under the influence of ancient superstitions as himself. Paganism had come down to them as a sort of secret inheritance, of light or darkness penetrating through their everyday belief, until it reached much further down into their minds, where it underlay all their notions and imaginings, and impressed upon their characters an extremely peculiar stamp. They were afraid of the night, afraid of the moon, afraid of the shadowy figures which the wood-crowned islands threw here and there upon the surface of the deep. It seemed to them that by disturbing at such hours the gentle ripples with our oars, we were guilty of something like sacrilege, towards what power they could not tell, or would not, for perhaps in their hearts they had familiarised their apprehensions much more distinctly than they chose to acknowledge. Nemesis bears a wide sway over the earth, but more especially enfolds the Mediterranean with her broad wings. There she resumes every night her ancient empire, and makes the hearts of all who go abroad beneath the sky pant and thrill with a consciousness of her presence.

We had just rowed by Castel-a-mare, when the doctor—a sudden thought apparently striking him—turned round to me and said: 'You mentioned to me yesterday that you had never visited the Blue Cave. Let us do so now. The play of colours is more marvellous by day; but the sense of solitude, the silence, the mingling of light and shadow, the movement and murmur of the half-fabulous water, will be more exciting, more charming by far at this delicious hour.'

I assented readily, and we moved on. It is no doubt very common to imagine at such times that the boat in which we sit forms the point of contact between two universes—the universe above, and the counterpart of the same universe below—and that we are upheld and borne along by we know not what power between these two systems of existence; touching neither, mingling with neither, yet powerfully acted upon by the influences of both. The water was still and smooth as glass, and seemingly far more transparent. We looked down into it, and far away in its unfathomable depths beheld moon and planets, and constellations flinging towards each other their golden light, until the concave was one blaze of splendour. Above, the eye was encountered by the same phenomena. For a while, no one uttered a word. The sailors moved backwards and forwards; the oars dipped, bright drops, like showers of molten pearl, rained over them as they ascended into the air; the boat moved forward, and shores, woods, islands flew past as in the panorama of a dream. Here and there, a long way off, lights twinkled between the trees; and as we moved among the islands, vast piles of masonry like prisons rose high among the rocks. I was not ignorant that thousands of brave hearts, in anguish and bitterness, were at that very moment throbbing freely within. Their owners had dared to dream of improving the social condition of their countrymen, and this, in most parts of the world, being a crime, they were expiating their proud fancies upon an insufficient supply of bread and water in those dungeons. But under the inspiration of the picturesque, we sometimes become hard-hearted, or else discover the knack of escaping from painful topics to enjoy the beauty that is before us. At anyrate, we were not so sad as might have been expected, and approached the precipices of Capri quite in the humour to enjoy all their grandeur. We had shot out a little into the Mediterranean to the north-west of Capri, and there paused a while to gaze at that mimic Alp thrusting up its rugged bulk out of

the waves. All travellers have seen it; but it appears to me that very few, if any, have infused into their descriptions anything like the grandeur of the rock itself. Perhaps, with all their experience, they have found it impossible. To guard against similar failure, I shall not attempt a description, but merely state two or three facts which may assist the fancy in representing the scene to itself. When the moon shines over Naples, over its white buildings, its vast bay, its woods, its promontories, the eye wanders along delighted from Vesuvius onwards until it is arrested by the dark frowning mass of Capri. Scarcely can it be said to be delighted then. The imagination experiences a rough, abrupt, strong, almost painful shock, as it beholds this abode of Tiberius rearing its Titanian proportions into the sky. Cliffs of giddy altitude hang beetling over the waves, with sea-mews skimming about their bases, and eagles rising with difficulty to their summits. Behind them stretch boundless expanses of ether, of the tint of amethyst tinged with smoke. Stars of liquid brilliance hang over the summit of the rock like a coronet, while the moon here and there paints with white light the smooth parts of the rock, which appear to hang like polished tablets against a vast dusky wall.

When we had gazed for some time at this prospect, the boatmen began of themselves to row towards the Blue Cave. Has any one ever rounded the north-western point of Capri without encountering a breeze more or less active? I have never known anybody who has. Let the Mediterranean be ever so calm, the Parthenopean Bay ever so lustrous and lovely, you no sooner approach the rocks of Capri, than the winds begin to blow, the surges to moan, and the caves to reverberate their murmur. At every pull of the oar, our hearts beat as we beheld the rocks throw up their stupendous masses above our heads. We approached the cave; we saw the tiny billows roll in and break with silvery foam against the black slippery rocks which defend it on the sea-side. Presently the oars were drawn into the boat, which, by the impulse already communicated to it, glided in between the rocks, where we found ourselves plunged for a moment in more than Egyptian darkness. By degrees, however, the eye recovered its power, and then we could perceive the moonlight stealing in through chinks and crannies, as if forcing its way through some diaphanous substance, which altered its nature and gave it a magical power over the mind. Still advancing, we reached a narrow ledge, upon which we landed. The boat then put back, while I stood with the doctor gazing out upon the moonlit sea. Rays of light fell here and there upon the dark waters which formed the floor of the cavern. Presently, as I gazed, blue streams shot from both sides of the rock, mingling and traversing each other, glancing, quivering, flashing, and partly illuminating the lofty irregular arch extending over our heads. Far in the distance, on the right, stretched a green avenue, which terminated in a red point; while on the left, a corridor of sapphire led the eye towards an opalescent point. My surprise and pleasure were great and unfeigned, and I expressed my astonishment that so little should have been said by strangers of so wonderful a place. Instead of replying directly to my observation, my companion said:

'On the very spot on which you and I are now standing, a terrible catastrophe took place many years ago. A young nobleman of dissipated habits and fierce character entertained a passion for one of the king's daughters. Being himself of high rank, he thought it scarcely an act of condescension on the part of the monarch to give him the girl in marriage; and accordingly, without the least ceremony, went to the palace and demanded her hand. Had his character been more respectable, the king might perhaps have

consented to overlook the disparity of position. But Girolamo had rendered himself remarkable by the wildness of his life, and was even suspected of piracy. At anyrate, he made voyages to the African coast, and came back from time to time laden with wealth. Some said he plundered the Moors; others, that he made no distinction between Moslems and Christians, but filled his coffers indiscriminately at the expense of all whom he encountered at sea. Influenced by these rumours, the king refused him his daughter; upon which Girolamo spoke thus:

'Your majesty's decision is perhaps the best. I have led a wild and wayward life; and though my fortune is great, and daily on the increase, I ought not, perhaps, to desire a connection with your family. Still, as I and my forefathers have always been faithful subjects to the crown of Naples, you will not, I feel convinced, refuse to grant me a smaller favour.'

The king, glad to perceive that the Count Girolamo had not taken his refusal to heart, was willing to conciliate him by any concession he considered reasonable.

'Well,' replied Girolamo, 'in a week from this time I intend giving a party in the Blue Cave, and shall have it boarded over and lighted up brilliantly, so that we may dance over the waves and banquet amid the rocks.'

The idea appeared at once new and striking to the king, and he promised to attend the party with his whole family. It is unnecessary for me to dwell upon the preparations made by Count Girolamo: they were on a scale of great magnificence; and on the appointed night, the royal barge, accompanied by numerous boats, filled with ladies and gentlemen, arrived at the entrance to the cavern. There, to their surprise, they found a series of steps, covered with costly carpets, leading up to what might be called the great saloon, then filled with a blaze of lights, adorned here and there with hangings, and in recesses of the rock, abounding with refreshments, wine sparkled in crystal goblets, and delicacies of various kinds tempted the appetite. After a while, the hall was cleared for a dance, and, as a special favour, Count Girolamo was permitted to lead out the queen. He was all gaiety, all smiles, and the whole company of dancers appeared intoxicated with delight. At length, as the evening drew on, the count enjoyed the pleasure of leading out the princess upon whom his heart had been fixed. It is not known whether the lady herself felt any attachment for Girolamo, though it is believed she did. Whatever may have been the case, as they were gliding along the floor, the count took her in his arms, and stamping violently, a trap-door opened beneath his feet, and down he went with his companion into the dark waves below. The terror and confusion that followed may be easily imagined—the whole party rushed towards the opening in the floor, and lights being brought, they sought to discover the bodies, but without effect. The waves had sucked them out; and it was not until the next morning that they were discovered, locked in each other's arms, beyond the entrance of the cavern.

As the doctor spoke, the light on both sides of the cave became more powerful, and shewed the surface of the water in the most distinct and vivid manner. The rocks seemed to have been transformed into pillars, with niches and hangings of gorgeous tapestry. Presently a hissing sound ran along the sides of the cave, and we were left in total darkness. The boat then approached, and groping our way into it, we pushed out silently into the moonlight.

'What we have just seen,' observed the doctor, 'is a mere contrivance of my own. I often visit this cave, and have invented an apparatus for lighting it up; but be persuaded that it is often converted into a blaze of splendour by other than human hands, and that Count Girolamo and the princess are beheld sitting

side by side at its extremity. Before them, the waves grow still, and appear to be converted into a marble floor, upon which hundreds of spirits whirl round in the mazes of the dance, while music breathes in through every crevice of the rock, and inspires them with unceasing activity.

I thanked the doctor for the interesting account he had given me, and returned to Naples, fully persuaded that he would soon need to be taken care of by his friends.

POLYGASTRIC ANIMALCULES.

THE wits of London, better able to discuss the merits of a fable by Dryden or a comedy by Congreve, long continued to amuse themselves with the wonderful discoveries of a body of philosophers that, under the title of the Royal Society, held frequent meetings at Gresham College. The enthusiasm for research that prompted men endowed with ordinary judgment to dissect mal-formed calves—to study critically the motions of spiders, snails, toads—or to feel interested in learning whether there were in certain foreign countries blue bees that made black wax and white honey, and similar subjects of investigation, appeared to the man of fashion in those days a deplorable delusion—pardonable perhaps in the gloomy time of Old Noll, when playhouses were closed, and all sorts of amusement forbidden, but certainly unbecoming such as had the good-fortune to live in the reign of the Merry Monarch. Nor needs such an estimate of the infancy of the distinguished Society surprise us when we bear in mind the apparent uselessness of many of its experiments and researches, and the indifference of its most exalted patrons to the true advancement of science. The chief delight of its royal founder was to put such puzzling queries as neither common sense nor philosophy could satisfactorily solve, or to gratify his curiosity by witnessing an 'anatomical administration,' as the rather rare spectacle of a dissection was called in those days. Surely some apology was afforded to the idle for scepticism regarding the utility of Prince Rupert's glass manufactory, or such a contribution in natural history from the Duke of Buckingham as 'the horn of a unicorn.' Moreover, its *Transactions*, which, under the ponderous title of 'An accompt of the present undertakings, studies, and labours of the ingenious in many considerable parts of the world,' the Society began regularly to publish, contained not a little that must have appeared extremely ludicrous to such—at the time the majority of the public—as could not sympathise with the many errors through which experimental philosophy had to struggle in its progress towards maturity. Among the papers that appeared in the *Transactions* during the year 1675, was one that caused almost as much amusement to the Society as to the loungers of the Mall. It was from a Dutch contributor, Anthony Leuwenhoek of Delft, whose ingenuity in improving microscopes—instruments to which the Society very wisely gave much attention—had procured him honourable distinction among his English associates. The curious observations which the superiority of his glasses enabled him to make, had not hitherto overstepped the limits of belief, but when, in the year mentioned, he declared himself as having discovered certain animals of such extreme minuteness that many thousands of them did not equal a grain of sand, his statement was received with derision. It is not impossible, from the proneness universally shewn by mankind to treat as profane such observations as reveal an elevated physical organisation in other beings, that the daring microscopist might in an earlier age have met the reward of Galileo.

The splendour of Leuwenhoek's discovery might well compensate him for an indifferent reception. He had the high fortune to have been the first to observe that

beyond the power of the keenest vision there lay an unsuspected world of life, surpassing in number all the united occupants of air, earth, and water. Examined through his lenses, the smallest speck of the green mantle of the standing pool resolved itself into myriads of individual existences. It has been reserved to his successors to discover that the waters of the seas, lakes, and rivers, are equally prolific—a view of the boundlessness of animated nature which it is almost impossible to comprehend.

From the facility afforded by vegetable infusions for procuring these little animals, they came to be known as Infusoria. This generic name is still retained; but, by the more scientific arrangement of the great Prussian naturalist, Ehrenberg, the class is divided into Polygastria, or many-stomached, and Rotifera, or wheel-shaped animalcules. It is to the former class that we ask the reader's attention, as the rotifers, from their more advanced organisation, are objects of inferior interest. The polygastrians are so low in the scale of being as to have no fixed type of form. Many important organs they want altogether, and such as they possess are very defective. They have neither brain nor spinal cord; nor eyes, blood, nor proper organs of locomotion. Many species have neither mouth nor digestive canal; and yet with all these defects, they are lively and playful, great eaters, and very fond of their ease. They have managed, in the successive eras of geological change over the globe, to avoid destruction. They are thus at once the tiniest and oldest inhabitants of the earth; nay, notwithstanding their subordinate position, they claim, through that wonderful chain of analogy that connects all nature, kindred with the representatives of the most exalted. Their vitality is so strong, that they are easily revived after several years' apparent death. Absence of air is the most favourable condition for their preservation; in fact, paradoxical as it sounds, interment is the surest way of keeping them alive.

From their abundance and antiquity, we are not surprised to find that these animals have an important function to discharge in the economy of nature. The preservation of life in other beings depends directly upon them. The ceaseless appetite of the polygastrian is employed in reducing the vast mass of effete vegetable and animal matter in the globe that is always hastening to decomposition, and which, if allowed an unopposed development, would speedily make its noxious properties known. This view of their utility enables us to appreciate the fitness of the homely name given to them by Professor Owen—the scavengers of the atmosphere. Nay, further, the effete substances so intercepted become, from assimilation in the system of the polygastrians, adapted to the support of more highly organised animals. It may not be out of place to observe here that the objections made against such water as is seen through the microscope to abound in animalcules, has been frequently urged in forgetfulness of the dependence of pure water upon the presence of a certain number of such beings.

Let us now consider a little in detail the organisation of a polygastrian. The animal essentially consists of a cell. A cell we know to represent the lowest order of vegetable or animal life. The polygastrian cell is only a stage removed from the Gregarina, which stands upon the very border of the two divisions, and is only known not to be a vegetable from its power of independent existence, and never advancing to a further stage of development. Some polygastrian species are bare; that is, the cell has no investment, but the majority are provided with a shell-covering either silicious or calcareous. This shell, fashioned after a variety of quaint patterns, is ingeniously adapted to the peculiar form of its wearer. Across some, it is placed horizontally; in others, it shoots out as a conical prominence over the tiny occupant; while in a third variety, this

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defensive armour expands in the shape of a shield. Immense accumulations of these shells are found in different parts of the world. Strata of great depth occur in Bohemia and the United States, entirely made up of infusorial shells. Sometimes their abundance occasions their being applied to unexpected purposes. Thus the berg-mehl, or mountain-meal, a white powder gathered by the people bordering upon Lake Lettnagssjön, near Urneä, in Sweden, and much esteemed as an article of diet when mixed with flour, consists entirely of these. In animals that live in water, having neither fins, tail, nor any fixed form of limb, it becomes a curious subject to inquire into their means of locomotion. In such polygastrians as are attached to foreign bodies, no mechanism of the kind is required; but, in the greater number, progression is generally maintained by cilia or hair-like processes. Some, indeed, have such a mobility of substance as enables them to furnish an extempore limb upon an emergency, but this agreeable power of improvising a hand or foot is not frequently met with. Thanks, however, to its ciliary apparatus, the polygastrian can row nimbly through the water, seize firmly upon his prey, or, if none be at hand, make a slight agitation of the water that will soon accumulate sufficient materials for a meal. The manner of connection of these cilia with the body of the animal is not clearly understood. According to Ehrenberg, they are fixed by distinct muscular processes; but to grant that, were to claim for the order a higher degree of development in the animal kingdom than other observers are disposed to admit. The cilia are sometimes arranged in sets, but more frequently they are scattered irregularly over the animal. They occur in greatest number at the neighbourhood of the mouth, for the obvious purpose of facilitating the seizure of food. The cilia are also of use in the peculiar respiration of the animal, by causing successive currents of water to strike against it.

Although destitute both of brain and spinal cord, the polygastrian is not without an analogue of these organs. A little red dot, once considered an eye, is now known to compose its limited nervous system. The functions of this part of the organisation are obscure, and to this may be ascribed the difference of opinion among naturalists respecting the movements of the animal. These are said by some to be automatic, and not the result of volition—a view apparently based upon the fact of the animal never having been observed in a state of quiescence. But even if there were not many ways of accounting for such restlessness, the evidence in favour of a contrary belief appears pretty conclusive. The most diminutive monad shrinks into a less form from the effect of fear, and carefully avoids, in his merry dance through the water, all contact with his playmates.

Though the polygastrians have no blood or proper circulating apparatus, there is a fluid, intermediate between blood and chyme, which circulates in a little central organ or heart, several pair of which lie along the backs of the larger varieties. But the most extraordinary parts of the organisation of these animals are those by which their digestion and reproduction are maintained. Although the view once held that the polygastrian consisted, as the name indicates, of an aggregation of stomachs, has not been confirmed by further observations, it is not without a certain amount of correctness, so far as the existence of a series of movable sacs or stomachs is concerned. Of these, which are dependent upon that mobility of texture noticed in connection with the means of locomotion, there may be from three or four to as many hundreds. Occasionally, when the animal wishes to gorge upon a victim as large as himself, these stomachs are all displaced—an opening is made at the most convenient position, and the prey enclosed, the little

glutton removing every trace of his temporary mouth. In a few of the more advanced species—and we should always remember that the difference between the larger and smaller polygastrics is as great as between an elephant and a mouse—there is a regular form of mouth, and even a complicated dental apparatus.

The most common mode of reproduction is by spontaneous fissure. A longitudinal or transverse division shews itself in some part of the animal, rapidly advances, and, when complete, two individuals result, both equal in size. Not unfrequently, the young, if we may so call it, begins immediately to divide. In the next most frequent process, that of gemmation, we are reminded of the vegetable kinship of the polygastrian. Here separate animals are thrown off in the form of buds, which differ from those produced by the former method in not attaining maturity for some time after leaving the parent cell. Omitting any notice of a third, or the oviparous process of reproduction, since its existence is disputed, we may mention the curious phenomenon observed in the *volvox globator*. In this little animal, the young may be seen through the transparent texture of the mother. Like her, they are provided with cilia, that enable them to swim almost as actively as after birth. In no long time, these, in their turn, become the recipients of independent existences. Well may Professor Owen say that 'Malthusian principles, or what are vulgarly so called, have no place in the economy of this department of organised nature.'

We shall, in conclusion, state shortly the connection existing between the polygastrics and more superior beings, as observed in the great law of unity of organisation. The infusorial monad is the sole unchanging organic form in the animal world. Every member of the four great sub-kingdoms—Radiata, Mollusca, Articulata, Vertebrata—has been a monad at some period of its existence. The little nervous dot of the polygastrian, its rude circulating apparatus and fluid, its displaceable stomachs, are but permanent representations of the temporary forms of the complicated nervous system, the highly organised blood, and the powerful digestion found in the most advanced class of animals. Even the similarity that exists between the human embryo and the polygastrian is retained in certain respects throughout life, for the cilia that line the nasal passages, the larynx, and bronchiæ of the adult man, are identical with those of the invisible monad.

CONVENTIONAL REPUTATIONS.

Literary life is full of curious phenomena. I don't know that there is anything more noticeable than what we may call *conventional reputations*. There is a tacit understanding in every community of men of letters that they will not disturb the popular fallacy respecting this or that electro-gilded celebrity. There are various reasons for this forbearance: one is old; one is rich; one is good-natured; one is such a favourite with the pit that it would not be safe to hiss him from the manager's box. The venerable augurs of the literary or scientific temple may smile faintly when one of the tribe is mentioned; but the farce is in general kept up as well as the Chinese comic scene of entreating and imploring a man to stay with you, with the implied compact between you that he shall by no means think of doing it. A poor wretch he must be who would wantonly sit down on one of these handbox reputations. A Prince Rupert's drop, which is a tear of unannealed glass, lasts indefinitely, if you keep it from meddling hands; but break its tail off, and it explodes, and resolves itself into powder. These celebrities I speak of are the Prince Rupert's drops of the learned and polite world. See how the papers treat them! What an array of pleasant kaleidoscopic phrases, that can be arranged in ever so many charming patterns, is at their service! How kind the 'Critical Notices'—where small

authorship comes to pick up chips of praise, fragrant, sugary, and sappy—always are to them! Well, life would be nothing without paper-credit and other fictions; so let them pass current. Don't steal their chips; don't puncture their swimming-bladders; don't come down on their pasteboard boxes; don't break the ends of their brittle and unstable reputations, you fellows who all feel sure that your names will be household words a thousand years from now.—*Atlantic Monthly*.

TOAD-WORSHIP.

The practice, which seems so unaccountable, if it be once seriously thought upon, of worshipping some of the lower animals, was not unknown on the coast of Cumana, and their treatment of toads may be mentioned as a ludicrous instance of that kind of superstition. They held the toad to be, as they said, 'the lord of the waters,' and therefore they were very compassionate with it, and dreaded by any accident to kill a toad; though, as has been found the case with other idolaters, they were ready, in times of difficulty, to compel a favourable hearing from their pretended deities, for they were known to keep these toads with care under an earthen vessel, and to whip them with little switches when there was a scarcity of provisions and a want of rain. Another superstition worthy of note was, that when they hunted down any game, before killing it, they were wont to open its mouth and introduce some drops of maize-wine, in order that its soul, which they judged to be the same as that of men, might give notice to the rest of its species of the good entertainment which it had met with, and thus lead them to think that if they came too, they would participate in this kindly treatment.—*Helps's Spanish Conquest in America*.

THE GOOD SHIP MARSHAL.

'Twas the red sundown of Christmas Day,
And off Cape Otway Head,
That the *Marshal* stood for Melbourne port
With canvas sparsely spread.

For all day long it blew a gale,
And they looked for land a-lee;
Yet under short and steady sail
The ship went bowlingly.

And all day long through send and wave,
And long swell flecked with foam,
Right on and on the *Marshal* held,
Like a courser heading home.

With sundown passed the driving wind—
It passed off gustily:
And slowly down to its deep, deep rest
Sunk the sultry austral sea.

Then the thoughts of all were full in port;
All hopes stood high and dry;
As specks in the good ship's gleaming wake
Shewed the seventy days gone by.

How strange the sound of 'Land, ho! land!'
(How full the round words fall)
They seemed to have wedded hand to hand,
As all wished joy to all.

In the speech of home, heart spoke to heart;
And friendly eye met eye:
Week on week they had walked apart
Whom this parting hour drew nigh.

Nigher yet, and a flaunting group
Broke from the master's door;
Sweeping the ship from stern to poop
For a sight of the golden shore.

And late on the bulwark's side a-lee
Tarried a little band
Of those who could not sleep at sea
In a ship so near to land.

Looking, you saw a white low line—
A long low line of foam,
While they talked of the cheerful frost and snow,
And the Christmas fires at home.

Slowly the headstrong ship wore in
With the steadfast undertow;
While the mistress moon smiled up above,
And the master laughed below.

Over the *Marshal's* shining deck,
And her low shrouds traced so fair,
There fell such calm, that spoken words
Seemed to linger in the air.

Steadily yet her topsails drew,
Stood 'Pilot!' from the truck,
And the helm to a steady hand was true,
When the good ship *Marshal*—struck.

The *Marshal* struck on her larboard bow,
And a hollow sound came, then
She heavily reeled till she shewed her keel,
And heavily grounded again.

Then did the startled master's shout,
And the mate, with word and blow,
Hurry the men to work aloft,
And the women to weep below:

Nearer the plunging vessel's keel,
Nearer the depths beneath;
To try the hold of their hearts on hope?
And to keep the watch of death?

The short night passed in the settling ship;
It passed—what more to say?
Terrors full as a dreadful dream
Pass as a dream away.

Crossing an early angry sun,
Rose something faintly dark;
And answering back to the *Marshal's* gun
Came the gun of an outbound bark.

Close in her cabin's scanty space,
Swarming her slipp'ry deck,
Through a stormy air and a seething sea,
All sailed from the lonely wreck.

Then the young band with the old was crossed,
And the brown head helped the gray;
For their all but life was lost, was lost
Sad salt-sea miles away.*

Good ships, your ribs are stanch and tried;
Your spars are tough and tall:
But a heart of oak in the master's side
Were the bulwark best of all.

* One needs to know but little of the ways and means of the poorer emigrants to be aware that few venture to bear anything of value on their persons. Taught by the reported experience of others that their class of passengers is almost certain to be robbed, gold, silver, even bills, as well as other valuables in their little stock, are stowed away in the strong box, safe in the hold while the voyage is safe; and when the ship goes down, all goes with it.